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POEMS *of the* WEST

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THE WEST TO THE EAST GIVES GREETING

POEMS OF THE WEST

S. GERTSMON



RICHARD G. BADGER

THE GORHAM PRESS

BOSTON, MASS.

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T^O my beloved wife, the source of all
my ambitions, I dedicate
this book.

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POEMS OF THE WEST

GREETING

THE WEST to the East gives greeting,
and opens the portals wide,
To her sister from over the mountains
she sends a welcome for her to abide—
In the land of nature's splendor and
with her enjoy the gifts,
The hand of God hath showered, and where his
works man's soul uplifts.

Here in the land of plenty, in the land of the
setting sun,
Where the balmy winds blow softly, and winter's
blasts are none,
Where the rose's bloom and fragrance fill the air
with sweet perfume,
And the grandeur of creation blend in infinite
attune.

West, oh land of promise, where rails and water
meet,
Where the fertile land gives freely of all that is
rich and sweet,
All hail, oh Western Empire, sublimely grand in
lore,
The world shall pay thee homage, when they have
known thee more.

The West to the East gives greeting, and to all
the world beside,
She of matchless beauty, the nation's wealth and
pride—
Throws her gates wide open, let enter all who may,
Into the land of plenty where the works of God
hold sway.

THE PIONEER'S REVERIE

***T**HE WEST owes all that it is or ever hopes to be, to the hardy pioneer who risked death in many forms in his efforts to discover a new empire. Having performed his task and wresting a home from nature, he would often at the close of his eventful life gaze contemplatively about him, and dream, and dream.*

The pioneer stood gazing from his home in the
Golden West,
On that which his sturdy hand had sown, and
God had abundantly blest;
Wheat and rye a-plenty the land with which to
feed,
The earth to give her bounty, where before was
only weed.

He gazed upon the mountain, and he gazed upon
the vale;
And thought of the days when he was young,
of the days when he was hale;
Again the call of the West came echoing to his
ears,
It brought new life to his chilled old heart, to his
eyes it brought the tears.

E'en while he sat in thought lost deep, his grizzled
locks the sunset kissed.
His snow-white hair, his bent old frame 'twas
plain to see no hardship missed.
Once more he heard the church bells chime in his
old New England home;
And with the turning back of time, he found
himself about to roam.



AGAIN HE HEARD THE CHURCH BELLS CHIME

He had left his home, had left his friends, had cast
his lot with the new-found West;
Had braved the plains and desert drear, 'twas
now his turn to sit and rest.
His mighty arm had blazed the trail for those
who after him might come;
His ax of steel had hewn a path, amidst the wilds
had won a home.

He came, he conquered. Need more be said? A
Western empire did he unfold;
From out of chaos a change he wrought, his fields
were many with grains of gold.
And though the path with hardships strewn, and
full of thorns the way,
Yet paused he not to count the cost, nor from his
purpose turned astray.

All hail to thee, O pioneer! To you we owe all we
behold;
The lowing kine, the waving grain, the thriving
cities with wealth untold.
And when at last the great call comes, and you
shall take your well-earned rest,
We'll hold thy name and mem'ry dear, O pioneer
of the West.

FROM THE HEIGHTS

STANDING on the top of "Council Crest," on the heights lying west of the city of Portland, Oregon, one cannot help but become inspired by the beautiful panorama that meets the eye. Below at one's feet lies the city teeming with life; to the north and east runs the magnificent Columbia, winding in and out of the hills. Far away to the east, stands Mt. Hood like some sentinel keeping guard, as he has for centuries past, while in due succession to the north are the Three Sisters, and Mt. Ranier. Gazing upon this awe-inspiring picture, one forgets himself and is lost in wonder.

From the heights I gaze and wonder, at the scene
spread out below;

Of river, mountain, and valley turned to gold in
sunset's glow.

I gaze entranced, enraptured, at the beauty of it
all;

While the grandeur of creation seems my being to
enthral.

What use of temples and churches? What use of
prayers and hymns?

Here with my God, the Creator, I stand while
His glory teems;

All around, about me, and I soar to ethereal realms
And there am lost, and speechless, while fancy
my soul o'erwhelms.

Far above the city's noises, its bustle, dust and
din;

In peaceful contemplation I gather strength of
spirit from within.



OF RIVER, MOUNTAIN AND VALLEY

And my soul in holy communion blends divinely,
grand, sublime
As I gaze in growing wonder at the infinity of
time.

Then, let my voice resounding, sing the praises
which I feel;
And let the whole world listen; and let o'er its
senses steal
The greatness of nature's beauty, let them stand
with me.
On the top-most heights and wonder at God's
infinity.

THE PASSING OF THE RED MAN

ONE of the pathetic features of the stride of civilization in this country is the rapid extinction of the Indian—he who was once lord and master of all this great domain. With what emotion this stoic red man watches the fast extermination of his race, with what bitterness he recognizes the superiority of the white man, and reluctantly takes on his modes and customs, I leave to the reader's conjecture.

When this land was young and its children great,
and no cloud obscured their clear-blue sky,
When they worshipped their gods in their own,
crude way, but always the one on high,
Whether sun or moon, or shining star, their faith
was all the same.
Their simple hearts, and simpler minds with fervor
became aflame.

Deceit they knew not. With childish trust they
met the whites with outstretched hand,
They bade them welcome to their board, and
made them welcome throughout the land.
But they knew not the guile of the Spaniard's
mind, until it was too late;
Then in sudden wrath at their treacherous friend,
the love was turned to hate.

On sped the years, a great change came, the land
with strangers o'errun,
While they who fought, who bled and died, by
cruel foe were hounded on.



ON CAME THE TORRENT, RESISTLESS, GRIM VISAGED,
SOUNDING THE KNELL TO THE INDIAN
RACE

Driven from that which was theirs by right,
theirs by justice of Heav'n above,
Hard pressed they left their native hearths, while
heart-rending cries the night air clove.

Westward their course with hope renewed, follow-
ing the sun while within their hearts,
A new born hope of a future home, goaded them
on as with arrow darts.
Till at last they reached the boundless West, and
pitched their tents on hill and vale,
Gave thanks to the gods for their warriors brave,
their loving wives and children frail.

Here in their haunts they roamed the wilds, and
lived their lives in tranquil mood,
Fought their fights in open field, in fair-won battles
their foes subdued.
E'en while these tribes in Western climes lived on
and thought themselves secure,
They knew not the peril that o'er them hung, nor
dreamt of the hardships they were to endure.

On came the torrent, resistless, grim-visaged,
sounding a knell to the Indian race,
Civilization stalked on in its vantage, undaunted
and fearless in its terrific pace.
Thus in their fury and anguish they battled,
fought for a cause that forever was lost,
Kept up the wars till all hopes were shattered,
and bought their existence at terrible cost.

THE PEAKS

*M*ANY moons ago," so runs an Indian legend, "the gods having become incensed at the tribes living in the vicinity of Mts. Hood, St. Helens, and Ranier; and because of their incessant wars, threw up these enormous barriers to act as sentinels. And," continues the legend, "did any of the gods wish to vent their wrath upon the offending tribes, they would cause the mountains to belch forth fire and brimstone."

How like grim sentinels they stand, the mountain
peaks sublime and grand,
Towering their summits of ice and snow, 'bove
river and valley far below.
Lifting their heads beyond the clouds, hiding the
sun 'neath their snow-white crests,
Gazing in scorn on hill and on dale, mirroring
moon's rays from their pure, spotless breasts.

Ages may come, ages may go. Peoples and
nations cut down in their prime,
Yet through it all these mountains shall stand, an
enblem of grandeur of infinite time.
And he who in reverence stands gazing spell-
bound, with awe-inspiring, bated breath,
With head uncovered, uttering no sound, thinks
of the life that lives after death.

Their beauty and splendor o'erwhelm him quite,
and cause his thoughts to soar,
To the utmost heights of the mountain top, as
so many have before.



HOW LIKE GRIM SENTINELS THEY STAND

There he may stand and drink his fill of that
which the soul inspires,
Of a scene sublime while its greatness, the mind
as with rare wine fires.

Then why rave of the pyramids of Egypt, of Italy's
catacombs?

They the mere handwork of mankind, built with
man's blood and bones.

While He, who these mountains created, and
placed them in sight of all,

Placed them for men His works to behold, their
minds and hearts enthrall.

THE CITY OF ROSES

***P**ORTLAND, Oregon, known throughout the world as the city of roses, has given over the first part of the month of June for an annual celebration—the rose festival. Here gather visitors from places wherever the city of Portland is known, to pay homage to the sweetest of all flowers.*

All hail to the city of roses. All hail to the queen
of the West.

Where sunshine and flowers are brightest, and the
land with plenty is blest.

Where craft from the whole world over find a
haven both calm and still,

And the endless march of progress sounds its
warning sharp and shrill.

Where the grains of golden harvests bring to her
their richest yield,

And the luscious fruits of orchards vie their crops
with that of field,

Where the flowers bloom in winter and the grass
is always green,

And nature is ever smiling, with beauteous face
serene.

Here where the hearts of her children, always
bids welcome to those

Who come to her threshold in sorrow, while
out of her full eyes there flows

Grieving, compassion, and succor for a sister
who mourns her lost,

Extending all help with hand open, nor pausing
to think of the cost.



ALL HAIL TO THE CITY OF ROSES

Then pay her all honor due her, Rose City, our
own beloved,
Adorn her in flowers and garlands, let her sub-
jects in humbleness bow.
For her let a name of glory be written on tablets
of time,
Of the fairest city of roses, beautiful, grand,
sublime.

TOILERS OF THE SEA

ALL along the Columbia River, and especially where it empties into the Pacific, innumerable fishing trawls can be seen. And many are the fishermen who owe their living to the millions of salmon that infest these waters and are known by their deliciousness throughout the world.

Through sunshine and storm, in fog or in rain,
he casts off his fish-nets again, yet again,
This son of the seas, reckless and bold, whose
herculean efforts are ne'er in vain.
Whose daring of danger, whose braving of death,
in hist'ry's annals have found welcome space,
Whose succor of comrade with last, failing breath,
e'en deep seas his valor could ne'er efface.

With light hand and heart he loosens his seines,
letting them sink in the river's dark depths,
To gather their fill of the daily catch and empty
them out of the o'erburdened nets.
'Tis bread for his wife and his children it means,
the deep must its harvest give up to his hand,
To him, toiler of waters, the world must give
heed, as well as his brother, the toiler of land.

Seas may run high, the storm-king rage, little
recks he the elements dire,
The warring deep has thrilled him through, has
set his mind and heart on fire.
He heeds not that his skiff is frail, nor that the
seething billows foam,
His fighting blood the sea hath roused—She, he
vowed, should be his home.



**WITH LIGHT HEART AND HAND HE LOOSENS HIS
SEINES**

Thus wore the day, and he who toiled that they
on land may have their fill,
Of ocean's choicest, richest morsels, gave his best
years with no thought of ill,
For the sea to him was a thing of beauty, it made
him drunk as with rich, red wine,
It filled his soul with its boundless grandeur, and
turned his thoughts to a power divine.

Oh, for a voice to sing the praises of these brave
toilers who risk their all,
Who brave the sea in fog and fury, and are lost
forever in its death-white pall,
Who fight and strive with trawl and line, while
they on land are slumb'ring on,
Through sleepless nights their vigil keeping, and
still are sleepless when breaks the dawn.

THE GORGE

ONE of the most sublime and awe-inspiring sights that meet one's eye in the West are the many canyons and gorges, hundreds of feet deep and running between two mountains whose perpendicular walls defy all ascent. As we stand gazing at this wonderful work of nature, we are, in spite of ourselves, led on to contemplation. But we, mere mankind, cannot solve this baffling problem, but must leave it to time eternal when, who knows, we shall learn the truth.

Oh, nature, you give us a problem that the wisest of us cannot solve.

Of the wonders of all thy creations, of the stars and heavens above.

Of the earth beneath, of its mountains, of its rivers and valleys which lie

With the sun and moon shining always, in beauty and splendor on high.

Tell me, I pray you, your secrets, of the end and beginning of time,

Of thy past—of the countless ages, that have made this world sublime.

Of the mission that is given to mankind, of the veil that from our eyes hides

That which we long to gaze on, which our body and soul divides.

Here is a scene that is worthy of the most famous artist's brush,

That causes men to grow God-like, and their voices sink to a hush,



TELL ME, I PRAY YOU, YOUR SECRETS

As they gaze in mute contemplation on a sight
that is heavenly grand,
Nor can they from this spot of glory their eyes
elsewhere command.

Cities may teem with their thousands, the works
of man's hand may seem great,
But here where nature is builder, even in its
rough and crude state,
'Tis superior to all crafts of mankind, its hand-
work so noble and grand,
When cities are wiped off the planet, His works
shall for ages yet stand.

THE PILOT

***I**N bringing ships into the harbor much depends upon the pilot. He must know bay, river or harbor as would any man who drives on the public highway, and in order to become acquainted with the waterways, must serve his apprenticeship upon different river craft before he can become eligible to hold the license of a pilot. He must begin from the bottom, from that of a deck-hand, and mount step by step to the high position.*

Storm-tossed and battered by the sea's angry waves, her canvas and rigging torn into shreds, With rudder dismantled, the battle-scarred ship her remnant of white wings weakly she spreads. "Oh for a breath of God-giving breeze," captain and crew with longing cry out, The harbor's in sight, oh welcome news, "The pilot! the pilot!" hoarsely they shout.

Yes, 'tis the pilot, in tug-boat, approaching, a help and a guide to all seafaring men, He first to welcome, he last to leave them, shouting a farewell till they meet again. But ah, what a parting on ocean's vast bosom for them who cannot the future foretell, Perchance they'll return to the harbor they're leaving, while the winds send the message "ahoy, all's well."

Grasping the wheel the pilot stands gazing, always ahead at the dim harbor lights, Steady of hand, of eye ever watchful, while the sea-battered veterans greet the home sights.



GRASPING THE WHEEL THE PILOT STANDS GAZING

Their loud acclamations the night air is piercing,
theirs is a joy that bursts forth without bounds,
They gather on deck their homesick eyes feasting,
while ears are assailed by familiar sounds.

The vessel is docked, the pilot steps forward,
grasping the captain's sea-worn hand,
"You've brought her through," he cries with
voice trembling, "you've brought her safe
home, sir, I knew you would land."
Then leaving the ship, his duty well finished, he
wended his way to his home with light heart,
He had guided the vessel safe to her anchor, he'd
leave her till time again to depart.

BUILDERS OF THE AIR

***E**VEN the various cities of the West can now boast of sky-scrappers. Buildings rising to the height of twelve and fourteen stories can be readily met with. The layman standing upon solid earth and gazing up at the workmen, who look no larger than manikins, often wonders at the courage and cool-headedness these builders of the air possess when by the slightest misstep they may be dashed hundreds of feet to the ground below.*

Hammer and rivet, iron and steel, oh for a pen
with which to feel,
To tell of the dangers that compass them round,
far, far, above the solid ground.
Steady of eye, steady of nerve, must these workers
be, nor must they swerve
To the right, or the left, on their high, dizzy
perch, a mind full of caution must they pre-
serve.

These builders of the air, dauntless and brave,
whose herculean efforts the world admires,
Whose untiring labors with both mind and hand,
naught but men's highest praises inspires.
Theirs is the life that so often has paid the toll
that is needed so that the world
March on in its greatness, unconquered, untamed,
its banner of progress to the wild winds unfurled.

Muscles of steel, of iron their hearts, eyes that
flash as coals of fire,
Up shoots the rivet of white-heat steel, sent on
its journey higher, yet higher.



STEADY OF EYE, STEADY OF NERVE

Sent on its mission by unerring hand, to land
safely into the can extended,
Set into place in this pond'rous mass of iron and
steel in high space suspended.

At last all is done. They who have labored, are
all but forgotten, their names are not heard.
Here stands the effort of human creation, its
head in just pride to the heavens is reared,
But they who have risked in bounden duty, their
lives and limbs for the daily wage,
The glory not theirs, only the labor; they're
gone from here to their next building stage.

THE VOYAGE

THE ship has finished loading and is now leaving on her voyage. She carries a cargo of all description—grain for Europe, lumber for Siberia. She puts out to sea, not knowing whether she will return to her port in safety.

Up goes a cheer as the anchor is weighed, the
gallant ship puts out to sea,
Her snow-white sails to the winds unfurled, she
leaves the harbor on the lee.
Her new painted prow the still wave cleaves, her
being becomes with life imbued,
The flag at her mast-head proudly is waving, the
raging seas she has subdued.

On billowy crest headlong and heedless, she
shapes her straight, unerring course,
Her only guide the starry heavens, while the
siren's call follows perforce.
Her captain and crew free and light-hearted,
lustily sing to the ocean blue,
Reckless, defiant, for fray ever ready, they to
their duty always prove true.

Storms will rage as the broad sea she crosses,
Neptune his watery snares will put forth,
Waves will break o'er her from stern to main-top,
she will become the ocean's wild sport.
And perhaps—who knows—when storm-driven,
she'll pass through the breakers into the calm,
Into safe haven, into still waters, into the harbor—
safe from all harm.



HER SNOW WHITE SAILS TO THE WINDS UNFURLED

THE SHEEPHERDER

MANY remember the recent range wars that were so bitterly fought by sheep and cattle men. Papers and magazines devoted columns and pages, and the news and stories were read and pondered upon. Many lives were lost in the conflict for grazing lands until the government at Washington threatened to take a hand. Yet, though the sheep men were on the weaker side, still did they survive the dark days and can still be seen at their old haunts.

With staff in hand the herder watches his flocks as they graze,
In foot-hills or up in the mountains, in summer
or through autumn's haze.
Till the winter's frost and bluster drives him to
warmer clime,
Then hies he into the valley, with his charges he
reaches betime.

Though the winds a hurricane blowing, the very
mountains may shake,
And the thunder's roar, and the lightning, cause
the dark heavens to break.
Then must he, ever waking, his lonely night vigil
keep,
Lest the wild wolf and the coyote, their bloody
harvest reap.

Like a mother the new-born he cares for, and
brings them safe into the fold,
They who have dropped by the wayside, he
shields from the beast who—grown bold—

Lurks for his prey in the darkness, and pounces
with unerring aim,
While the flock with nature's pure instinct, the
herder's protection all claim.

And like the Mighty Herder above us, who his
own flock never leaves,
To the tender mercies of vultures, and their suffer-
ings always relieves,
So does this staunch, lonely tender, of countless
thousands of sheep,
Watch over his tender charges, while they in
security sleep.



HIS LONELY NIGHT VIGIL KEEP

THE PROSPECTOR

NO sooner had winter's rigor left the mountain when the prospector, loading his pack-mule with provisions and tools to last him during his trip into the gold regions, sets out with hope in his heart renewed. For years has he hunted that elusive strike, and as yet has not succeeded in locating it. But his hopes, though lagging during the dreary winter months, are revived when nature puts on new life. And once more he starts out with a golden vision ever before him.

With shovel and pick he roams the wilds, hunting
earth's rich golden store,
To him she must give which with her buried lies,
she must withhold it no more.
For Dame Fortune at last upon him hath smiled,
and given her own consent,
And he, like brave knight of olden times, on
conquest of gold is bent.

The mountain is steep, and dangerous betimes,
the path in the clouds is lost,
Yet little recks he the dizzy heights, nor does he
count the cost,
Gold here lies which for him will buy all that his
heart desires,
Its yellow gleam his eyesight blinds, its richness
his whole being fires.

No more shall want incompass him round, nor
hunger hold her sway,
The night hath passed, the clouds rolled by, at
last has dawned the day,

His sun so long in pall obscured, again shall shine
for him,
And he who has drunk of misery's fill, joy's cup
shall quaff to th' brim.



WITH SHOVEL AND PICK HE ROAMS THE WILDS

THE PLOWMAN

AND the spears shall be turned into plow-shares." Such was the prophesy in the time of war. And where the Indian tribal wars and the wars between the red man and the white waged fiercest, now wave the grains of wheat and barley, while the plowman whose hand and brain has caused this to pass, stands gazing upon his handiwork, the lord of all he surveys.

With hand upon plow lightly resting, his labors
he proudly surveys,
Gazes on dell and on meadow, on his horses and
cattle who graze,
On grains of gold and silver, waving softly in the
summer breeze,
Thinks of his passing hardships, and dreams of
his future ease.

Labor his hands had hardened, and caused dark
furrows to grow,
In rich, dark earth he had planted, so that the
seeds which he sow
Thrive in rain and sunshine, and gladden the
hearts of all men
With rich and bountiful harvests, which are
gathered again, yet again.

Here in the wilds he had striven, to gather from
nature his toll,
The best years of life he had given, his conquest
had been sharp and bold,
His future home he had planted, so that those
who may after him come,

Shall find a haven most blessed, nor wish any
further to roam.

With hand upon plow lightly resting, and eyes
that a pure vision see,
While tears the dark cheeks o'erflowing, to his
heart bring a sweet melody.
And when he has ended his mission, and his
works on this earth are done,
Shall he, he wonders in silence, to his well-earned
rest be gone?



WITH HAND UPON PLOW LIGHTLY RESTING

THE ROUND-UP

TWICE a year the countless cattle on the Western plains are gathered together for branding. The "round-up," as it is called, means a cessation for the many cowboys who have herded the bunch continuously throughout the summer. And now comes a reckless expenditure of the accumulated earnings that have steadily been growing. For, being out in the mountains, the cow-puncher has no chance to spend his wages.

The hoof-beats are music to the cow-puncher's ears, while the round-up his very soul tries,
As he dashes on mount as wild as he, and the vast, moving herd espies.

For 'tis the life he loves, this rover bold, 'tis his sweetheart, wife and home,

This wild land untamed by the hand of man,
though its vast expanse he may roam.

He loves its wild, wide ranges, its mountains, its deserts drear,

Out on the barren in darkness, he slumbers with no thought of fear.

As a child he trusts her always, his guide the heav'nly star.

This beacon he knows will not fail him, its twinkle he sees from afar.

The herd he knows by instinct, its wild and tranquil moods,

The restless snort and pawing, that cannot be subdued.

When the roar of their stampeding sounds like
death-knell to his heart,
And the countless thousands, hoof-beats cause
e'en mem'ry to depart.

Yet, spite all these dangers, he loves these west-
ern plains,
Its perils to him are sweetest, its grandeur his
wild blood tames.
The sounds of the round-up that echo, through
mountain, hill and dale,
He would not leave its presence, beside which
all other things pale.



THE HOOF-BEATS ARE MUSIC TO THE COW PUNCHER'S EARS

THE FOREST

WHILE the forests of the Eastern states are being depleted, those of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California give their yields unceasingly to the lumber markets of the country. And, besides supplying our own land, the products of these Western forests find their way into other parts of the world.

In towering strength, with proud heads uplifted
in grandeur to the clear, blue sky,
The mighty forests in sombre silence lie peacefully sleeping while through them sigh
The mild winds of summer, when fair Dame
Nature dons her garments of beauteous green,
Or winter's harsh blasts in their frozen fury,
clothes their boughs in snow-white sheen.

From their comrades bold they at last are severed,
to meet the needs of the world of men,
But ah! though their lives are cut and sundered,
yet shall they sprout and grow again.
The beauty and wonders of nature's fulfillment
shall form a long and endless sign,
Of the mission that is given to all creation by the
power above us, the power divine.



THE MIGHTY FORESTS IN SOMBRE SILENCE

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[illegible]

ANNEX



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